

Dr. Shaniff Esmail



Brief Abstract and Title:

The Impact of MS on Sexual Functioning and Relationships

Sexuality is an essential part of the human experience. Physical and emotional changes associated with MS potentially can affect sexual health adjustment and creates concerns surrounding sexuality. This interactive presentation will describe the impact of MS on an individual's sexuality and relationships. Results of a two part qualitative research study will be reviewed - describing the lived experience of couples where one partner had been diagnosed with M.S. The session will conclude with a review of strategies, which have been shown to be effective with helping individuals and couples contend with MS as it relates to sexuality.

Learning objectives:

By attending the session participants will:

1. Gain an understanding of the impact of M.S. on sexuality
2. Appreciate the importance of mutual responsibility when looking at MS as a couple's issue.
3. Learn effective strategies to deal with MS and its impact on sexuality.

Dr. Esmail is an Occupational Therapist with clinical and research interest focusing primarily on sexuality and disability. Specific areas of interest and research include

- Sexuality counseling and intervention for couples impacted by disability or illness
- Sexuality training and education for children with disabilities and their parents.

Dr. Esmail is also a professor for the physical assessment courses in the department of Occupational Therapy as well as a variety of human sexuality courses at the University of Alberta, in the faculties of Rehabilitation Medicine, Medicine and Human Ecology.